

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 05414 030633Z
ACTION CU-03

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 5414

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, US, GE
SUBJECT: DURER PAINTINGS

REF: BERLIN 7152

1. EDWARD SPRAGUE JONES, REPRESENTING ARTEMIS S.A. WITH REFERENCE TO LITIGATION INVOLVING TWO DURER PAINTINGS, AND WHO HAD WRITTEN CHARGE REQUESTING APPOINTMENT WITH APPROPRIATE GDR AUTHORITY, VISITED EAST BERLIN AND WEIMAR FEBRUARY 18-25. APPOINTMENT WAS MADE WITH DR. MANFRED HOFFMAN, IN CHARGE OF GDR INTERNATIONAL CIVIL LAW CASES, WHO PREDICATED TO PAO THAT CHANCES FOR SETTLEMENT VIRTUALLY NIL BUT HAD NO OBJECTION SEEING JONES. THREE-HOUR MEETING TOOK PLACE FEBRUARY 21, JONES TAKING NOTES - WHICH HE LATER ALLOWED EMBASSY TO COPY - AND HOFFMANN RUNNING TAPE RECORDER. JONES FOUND HOFFMANN ARTICULATE, KNOWLEDGEABLE AND TOUGH ADVOCATE. MAIN POINTS FOLLOWS.

2. GDR HAS RETAINED HARRY RAND OF BOTKIN, SKLAR AND HAYS WHO IS DUE TO ARRIVE BERLIN MARCH 8. JONES SAID HE HAS REFUSED TO DEAL WITH RAND AND THAT SETTLEMENT POSSIBLE ONLY BY PRINCIPALS, WHEN JONES SUGGESTED FURTHER COMMUNICATION BE DONE THROUGH PAO, HOFFMAN APPARENTLY RECOILED, SAYING IT UNPRECEDENTED. (JONES SAID THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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HE WOULD NEVERTHELESS SEND COPIES OF ALL FUTURE CORRESPONDENCE TO EMBASSY).

3. JONES TOLD HOFFMANN THAT GRAND DUCHESS HAD STRONGER CASE BUT THAT IF EITHER SHE OR US LITIGANT ELICOFON WON, GDR WOULD IN EITHER CASE BE LOSER. THEREFORE, HE RECOMMENDE SETTLEMENT THROUGH BARTER, WHICH WAS HIS

MAIN REASON FOR PRESENT DISCUSSION, HE SUGGESTED THAT HOFFMAN MIGHT FIND IT MORE FRUITFUL DISCUSS ITEMS FOR BARTER RATHER THAN PURSUE SUIT.

4. HOFFMAN DISPLAYED SUSPICION OF JONES AND KEPT ASKING WHO WAS PAYING HIM, BUT NEVERTHELESS HEARD HIM OUT. HE MAINTAINED THAT IF SETTLEMENT EFFECTED, FRUITS THEREOF WOULD GO TO WEIMAR MUSEUM.

5. COMMENT: JONES' ATTITUDE AND REPLIES OUR QUESTIONS WERE EVASIVE AND HIS NOTES CONFUSING, WITH REFERENCE TO PERSONALITIES AND LEGAL MANEUVERS WITH WHICH WE ARE UNFAMILIAR. IF DEPARTMENT WISHES, EMBASSY PREPARED POUCH COPIES OF JONES' FOUR PAGES OF HAND-WRITTEN NOTES. POLANSKY

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Message Attributes

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